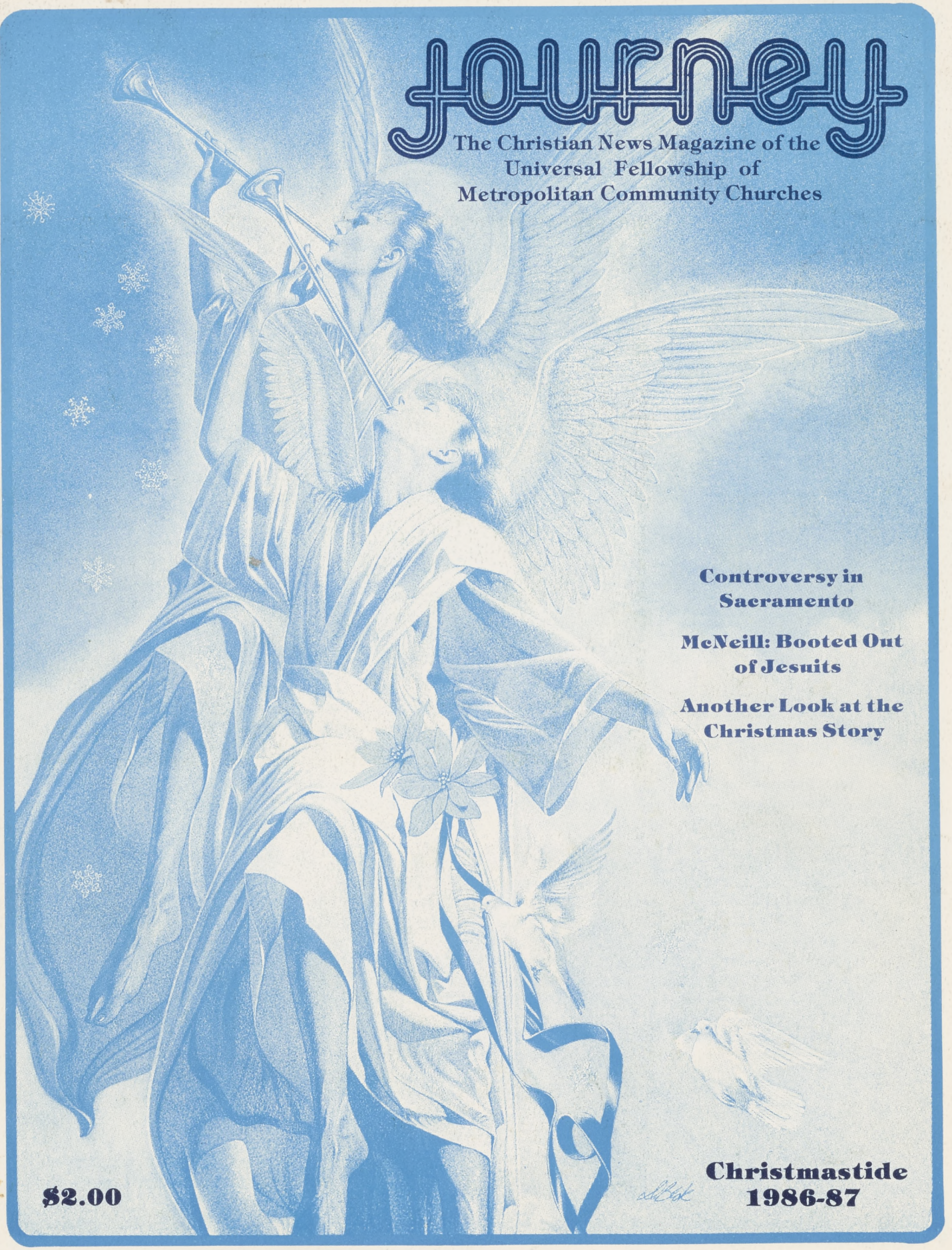
journey

The Christian News Magazine of the
Universal Fellowship of
Metropolitan Community Churches



Controversy in Sacramento

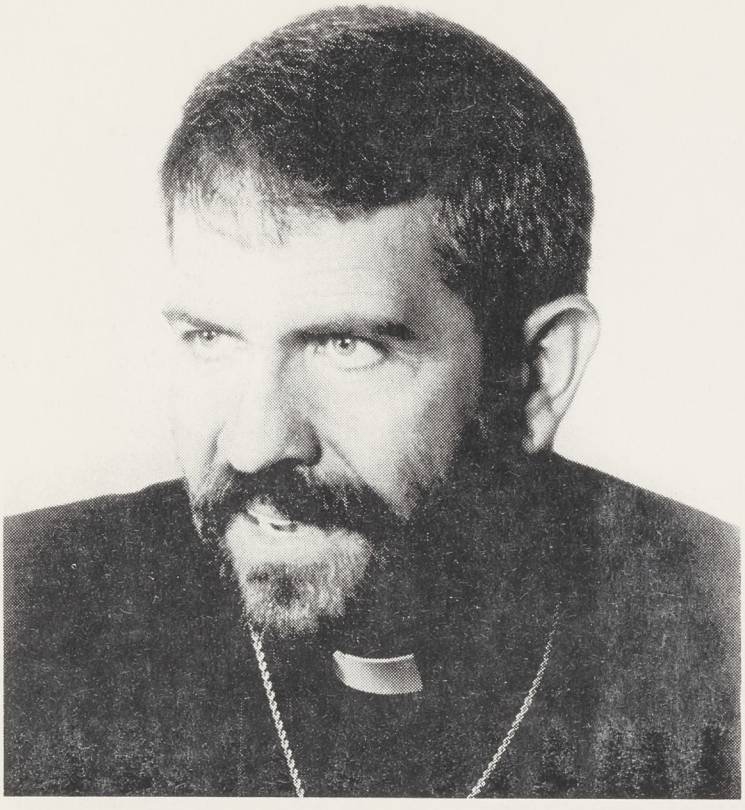
McNeill: Booted Out of Jesuits

Another Look at the Christmas Story

$2.00

Christmastide 1986-87

A Christmas Message From the Reverend Elder Troy D. Perry



Almost 2,000 years ago a child was born to a teenage virgin and the world has never been the same. For the first time in history God's plan for the millennium to come was revealed to humanity through the Christ Jesus. No more war; no more death; only eternal peace and eternal life, and it all started with the birth of one child.

This is the time on the Christian calendar when we celebrate that birth with the holiday of Christmas. Also, a few days later we celebrate New Years, the start of a new beginning. How thankful we all are for this special time of remembering how good God is to us in giving us God's greatest gift, God's self in flesh, who came and dwelt among us.

On a more personal note this Christmas and new year hold a special place for the Perry family. This last year my mother, Edith, was diagnosed with cancer of the breast. It was my mother who broke the news to my four brothers and me. We were devastated but mother pulled us all back together as she has so many times in the past with her testimony. "Children," she said, "I've lived such a long and wonderful life. I'm ready when God is; it's O.K."

My mother has spent more time in the hospital then out this last year or so it seems to me. Mother was discharged from the hospital last week. Her doctor does not feel she will make it another year. The cancer continues to spread. We continue to pray for mother as the pain increases and we ask you who know mom and love her to do the same.

She has been a member of the UFMCC for 17 years and she loves this church. For the Perry family, Christmas and New Years will be a time of not only giving and receiving but a sobering time of knowing what lies ahead for us.

"There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for all these things are passed away."

Revelation 21:4

All because of the birth of one little child.

JOURNEY

EDITOR
the Rev. David Day

Editorial Liaison
the Rev. Elder Donald Eastman

Graphic Design & Production
Pat Hayman
A.G.A.P.E. Graphics

Advertising & Circulation
Ravi Verma

Contributing Writers
Tom Doyal
the Rev. Larry J. Uhrig
the Rev. Elder Troy Perry

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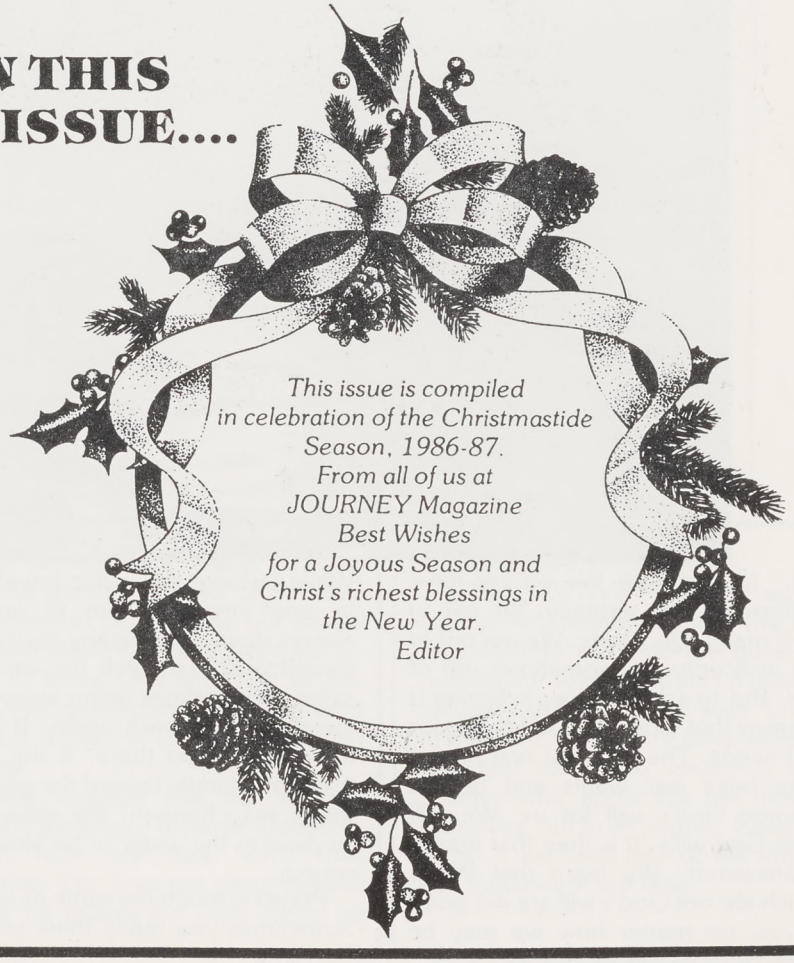


This issue is compiled in celebration of the Christmastide Season, 1986-87. From all of us at JOURNEY Magazine Best Wishes for a Joyous Season and Christ's richest blessings in the New Year. Editor

"I'D RATHER BE SAILING"

by the Reverend Larry J. Uhrig

"When you pray, pray like this, 'Not my will, but Thine be done.' " So we pray in the Lord's Prayer and so Christ has instructed us to pray. But, what are we doing when we pray? Are we talking God into something God might not want to do? Are we manipulating divine power? Are we changing the events of life?

What we don't do when we pray is convince God of our need by making a good case for it. When we pray we do open ourselves to the will of God and to the power of God. To pray is to *"Access the Power"* of God. God offers us Grace for all our needs. God offers us power to overcome evil. All that God offers is always available to us. The Scripture says, *"You have not, because you ask not."* (James 4:2) We do not have because we ask wrongly. We ask to fulfill many ego needs. We ask out of our insecurity and sometimes out of fear. But to ask in prayer believing is to know that God will provide for our real needs. The result of real prayer is to have our wants and desires become God's will for us. We will what God wills. It is then that prayer is answered. We learn that things which are not God's will are not good for us, no matter how we may be convinced that they are good. Some things which we are certain we need are in fact not necessary at all.

To pray is to access the power available from God and to allow it to flow in and through us. Then we discover great power which is ours for the asking. In asking we open ourselves to receive what is already there. Prayer is a recognition of spiritual reality. To pray is to focus our senses and attention upon this reality.

Prayer is like sailing. The sailor is dependant upon the wind. The wind is both adversary and asset. The wind can carry you to your goal or dash you on the rocks. One who sails must soon learn how to tack. Tacking means to travel in a zigzag course to reach a defined point. While tacking, the sailor travels first in one direction then in another always slowly proceeding toward the distant goal. To catch the wind the sailor is sometimes going away from the goal, then back again. It is the only way to get there. If the sailor turns impatiently toward the goal two things may happen; the sailor may be dead in the water or be blown off course.

Prayer is much the same as sailing. Sometimes you many think you are not going the right direction is life. To access the wind of the Spirit to respond to the power of God, your course must be carried by God's will. Slowly yet surely you will reach the goal of life and fulfill the will of God. This can only happen if you allow the Spirit to lead. So when you think the direction is wrong, check your course by yielding in prayer, by accessing the Spirit. The Scripture speaks of the breath of God moving over the face of the waters in creation. So let the breath of God fill your sails and carry you on to the will of God. Don't struggle and protest, but rather sail. In our hurry and impatience, in our desperate needs, we often turn ourselves directly toward the way we know we should go. So often we find ourselves adrift without power. Other times we are far off course and still other times we are dashed upon life's rocks. But to pray at all times in the Spirit, to pray without ceasing, is to access the wind, to move in the power of God.

The next time you see a bumper sticker which reads, "I'D RATHER BE SAILING", think prayer. The next time you see sails in the water, Thank God.

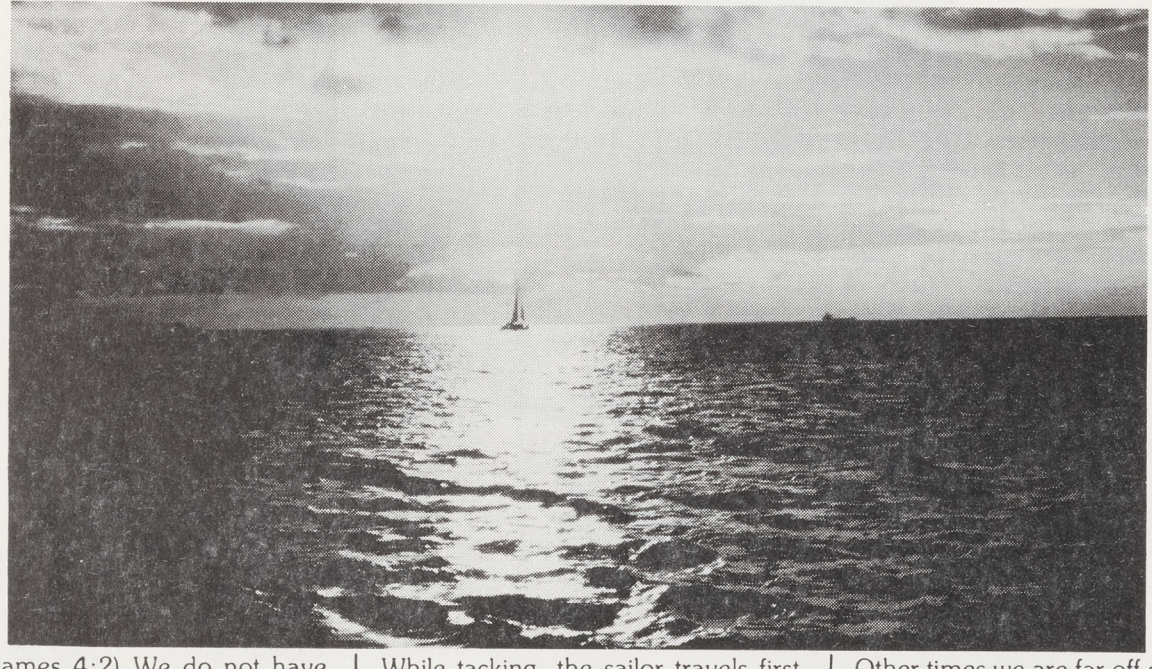


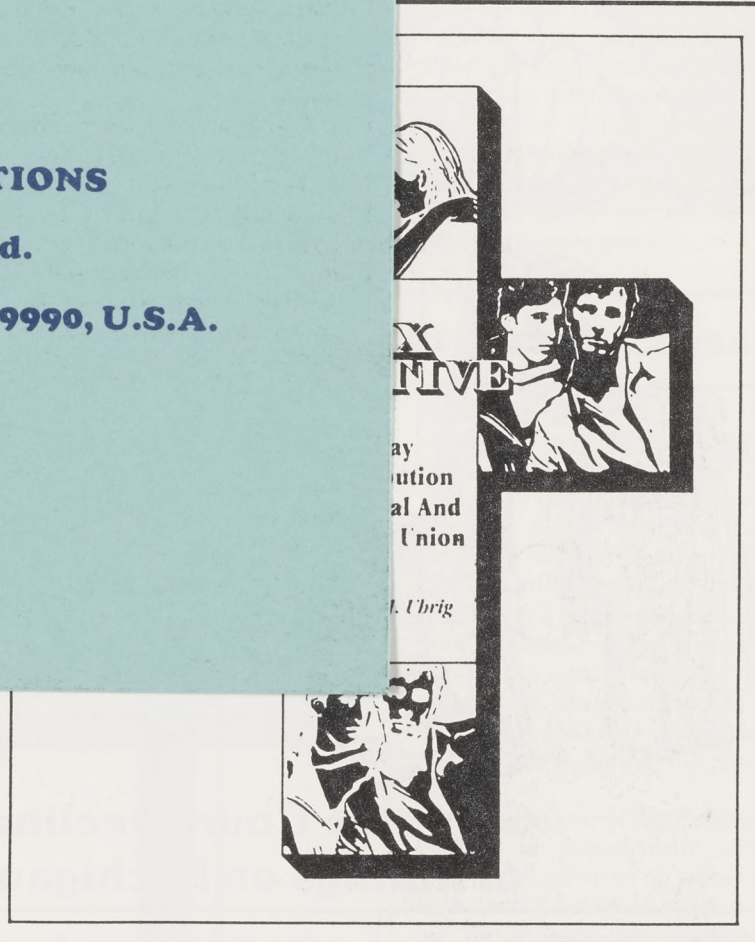
PHOTO BY BEV TEAGLE

A BOOK REVIEW

by Tom Doyal

SEX POSITIVE

...on to Sexual and Spiritual Union, ... Boston, 1986. 95 pages. $6.95 in ... or your local bookseller.



Author Larry Uhrig is pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church in Washington, D.C. and the author of a previous book *The Two of Us*. In his latest book he explores the spiritual value to all humankind of lesbians and gay men. The subject is vast, but this slender volume is a wonderful beginning for such a

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The old, tired prohibitions are trotted out not only to condemn homosexuals, but to preserve the culturally pervasive patriarchy. Uhrig knows that much of that traditional church teaching is bigotry masquerading as wisdom. He calls for an acknowledgement of one's own homosexuality that is joyous enough to be a celebration.

Sexual acts are some of the most powerful physical experiences most of us will ever have and Uhrig calls for each person to examine the implications of those experiences for their spiritual effects. Most of us have answered in our lives the question of whether one may be homosexual and Christian with a resounding yes, despite the continuing chorus of negatives from bigots.

The more important question is how we may lead lives that allow a union between our sexual conduct and our spiritual pursuits. Somehow, the question of just how our sexual acts contribute or detract from our efforts to know God must get its just due. The question must be explored even if it cannot be answered with finality.

Uhrig suggests that our spiritual growth depends, in large measure, upon how we deal with that question. He does not spare himself when he relates his own efforts to find an answer in his own life.

SEX POSITIVE makes a significant contribution and points the way for others to continue the quest for making our sexual conduct a positive influence in our spiritual lives. Living in truth and the light of God, lesbians and gay men may evolve a sex-positive ethic applicable not only to ourselves, but to all people. Read the book. It explores one of the important inquiries of our time.

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To pray is to access the power

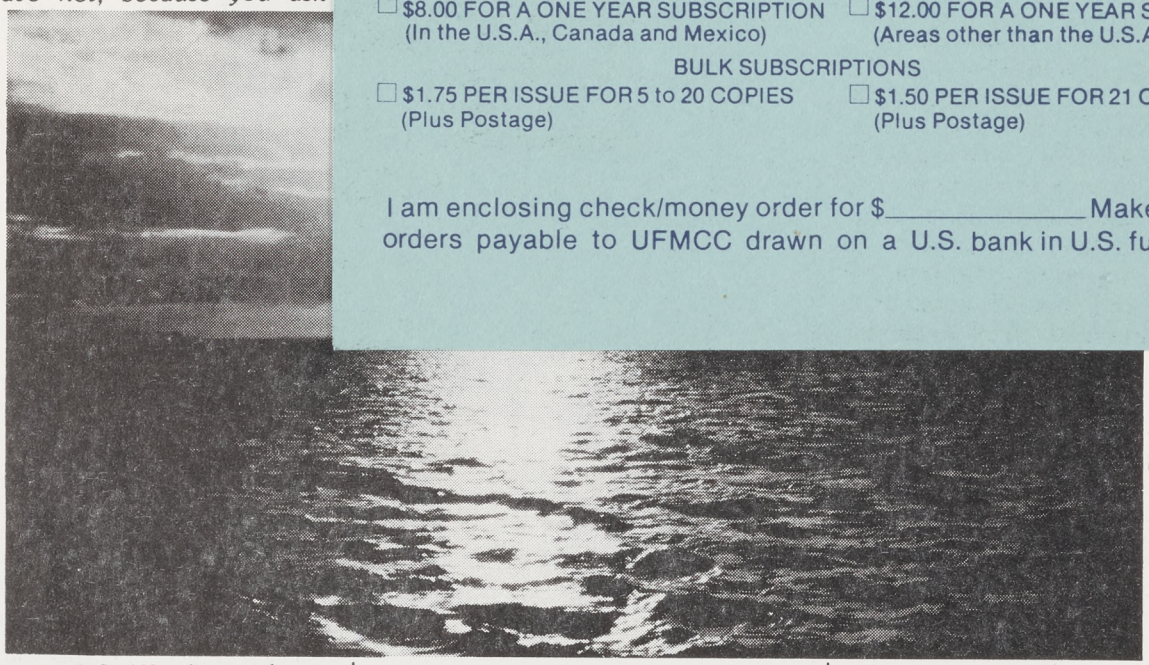

PHOTO BY

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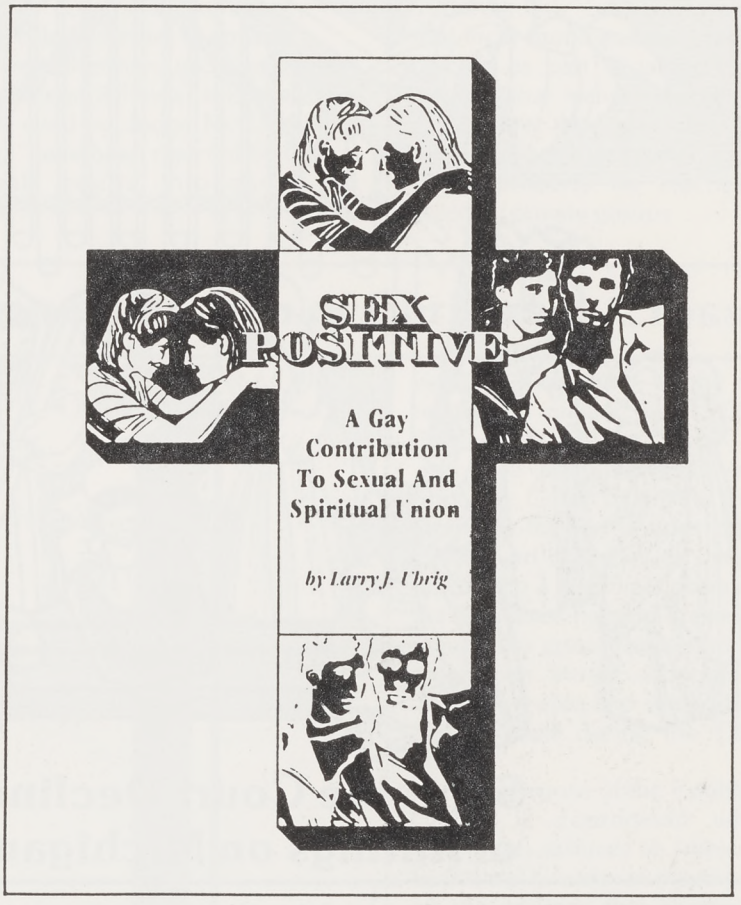
A BOOK REVIEW

by Tom Doyal

SEX POSITIVE

SEX POSITIVE: A Gay Contribution to Sexual and Spiritual Union, by Larry J. Uhrig, Alyson Publications, Boston, 1986. 95 pages. $6.95 in paperback, available from the publisher or your local bookseller.



Author Larry Uhrig is pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church in Washington, D.C. and the author of a previous book *The Two of Us*. In his latest book he explores the spiritual value to all humankind of lesbians and gay men. The subject is vast, but this slender volume is a wonderful beginning for such a serious and important inquiry.

Readers should be advised that some of the events and personal experiences described in the book are presented quite graphically. While this reviewer was not put off by this quality, some readers may wish the particularly specific descriptions had been saved for an altogether different kind of book. Having issued that gentle caveat, your reviewer feels obliged to point out that a significant theme of the book is to question the sex-negative bias of the culture, particularly the church.

Uhrig suggests that the sexual ethic emerging from the experiences and efforts of lesbians and gay men may be a generous gift for all humankind, heterosexual and homosexual. He clearly shows that the traditional or conventional wisdom about sexuality is geared toward procreation and does not address sexual conduct that falls outside that narrow range of behavior. Any sexual ethic from the Christian homosexual community would transcend these confines.

The old, tired prohibitions are trotted out not only to condemn homosexuals, but to preserve the culturally pervasive patriarchy. Uhrig knows that much of that traditional church teaching is bigotry masquerading as wisdom. He calls for an acknowledgement of one's own homosexuality that is joyous enough to be a celebration.

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CHRISTMAS and the COURTS

Supreme Court Declines Review of Rulings on Michigan Creche

WASHINGTON (RNS) -- The Supreme Court has decided not to reopen its internal debate over the constitutionality of cities' erection of Christmas nativity scenes.

In an order filed Nov. 3, the court - apparently without dissent -- rejected an appeal by the city of Birmingham, Mich., that it consider overturning two lower court decisions banning a 25-year practice of placing the figures of the Christ Child, Mary, Joseph, and shepherds and lambs on the front lawn of city hall during the Christmas season.

City attorneys argued in papers asking for the review that the lower panels' findings ran contrary to the high court's 1984 ruling in Lynch v. Donnelly, a 5-4 decision upholding Pawtucket, R.I.'s longstanding practice of erecting a nativity scene on private property. In the Pawtucket dispute, the court noted, a key factor was the presence of other, secular seasonal figures set up with the creche. In Birmingham, the creche stood alone except for a Christmas tree and lights.

Two years ago, a federal district court banned the Michigan city's continuation of the practice, ruling it had no secular purpose, had the primary effect of advancing one religion, and excessively entangled church and state.

When the city appealed, the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the lower panel on the questions of purpose and entanglement but agreed the Birmingham practice had the primary effect of advancing Christianity in violation of the establishment clause of the First Amendment.

Federal Judge Calls U.S. a Christian Nation in Creche Decision

CHICAGO (RNS) -- A federal judge has described the United States as a "Christian nation" in upholding the right of municipal officials to permit the display of a Christmas creche by a private group in City Hall.

In his ruling, U.S. District Judge Frank McGarr said, "The truth is that America's origins are Christian and that our founding fathers intended and achieved full religious freedom for all within the context of a Christian nation in the First Amendment as it was adopted rather than as we have rewritten it."

He said that the display of the creche has become "a mere seasonal tradition pleasant in its associations and connotations." Although the Nativity scene "may have religious meaning to some," Judge McGarr said, "its inclusion in a larger Christmas display does not constitute advocacy of a particular religious message."

Sylvia Neal, an attorney for the American Jewish Congress, which filed suit against the city regarding the creche last year, called the judge's ruling "an incredible opinion." She said her agency has not decided whether to appeal.

Robert Sherman, midwest director of American Atheists, said the arguments cited by Judge McGarr in his ruling "have been rejected by federal appeals courts throughout the nation."

In 1978 a federal court ruled that public funds could not be used to erect or maintain the City Hall display. At that time the creche was turned over to the Chicago Plasterers Institute, and that group has maintained it ever since. The suit on which Judge McGarr ruled challenged the creche's display on municipal property.

In a landmark decision in March 1984 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that local municipalities may display creches as part of larger Christmas displays that include secular figures. A year later the high court ruled that municipalities must provide space on public property for creches sponsored by private groups.

High Court Rejects Appeal on Ban of Christmas Cross

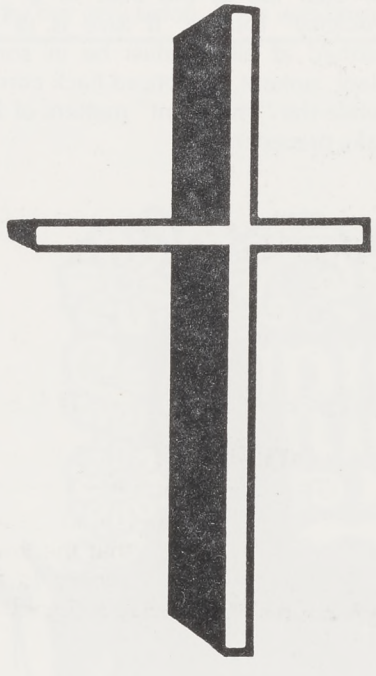
WASHINGTON (RNS) -- The Supreme Court, without comment, has rejected an appeal by the city of St. Charles, Ill., to keep a cross-shaped Christmas light display atop its municipal fire station.

The American Civil Liberties Union and two of its members asked the U.S. District Court for Northern Illinois to issue a temporary restraint prohibiting St. Charles from including the three-story cross in the city's annual Christmas display. The cross was formed with strings of lights hung from the radio/television antenna and crossbar brace on top of the fire station building.

In granting a preliminary injunction, the district court ruled the cross display had "the effect of conveying an association with or tacit approval of Christianity."

The 7th Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously affirmed the lower court decision, calling the cross both a distinctly and a sectarian religious symbol.

Writing for the appeals court, Judge Richard A. Posner distinguished between the more traditional creche -- or nativity scene -- and the cross display. He said all decorations except the cross



have lost their "religious connotations for most people," while the cross is "an ancient...religious symbol."

"The cross is either a secular decoration, in which event there are many equally or more decorative substitutes at hand, or an attempt to establish Christianity as the officially recognized religion of St. Charles," Posner wrote.

In their attempt to convince the Supreme Court to review the case, attorneys for St. Charles called the lower court decisions a "stilted overreaction to a legitimate observance of the Christmas holiday season." They argued the cross display did nothing more than attract shoppers to the downtown area and symbolize peace and goodwill during the Christmas season.

"The purpose of the Establishment Clause is deprecated when its meaning is tortured to forbid a city's traditional Christmas lighting display on the grounds that illumination of the lights for a few hours each evening poses a danger of establishment of a state church," the city's attorneys contended.

Attorneys for the ACLU emphasized the cross' size and location made it not just one part of an overall display. They also argued a cross is not a traditional Christmas symbol.

"A cross does not evoke the traditional or historical roots of Christmas," they said. "It evokes the Christian religion itself and the events commemorated at Easter."

Another Look at the Christmas Story

by the Reverend David Day

The other day I was looking again at the Christmas story and I found something which was a new thought for me. I looked carefully at the cast of characters in this dramatic scene from real life. I particularly gave careful consideration to these:

Mary
The Shepherds
The Innkeeper
The Magi
Herod the Great

A close look reveals more about human nature than you might imagine.

The ways in which these persons responded reflect, in great part, how we as humans still respond to love. Christ was God in flesh. If God is love, than Christ was the embodiment of love in the world.

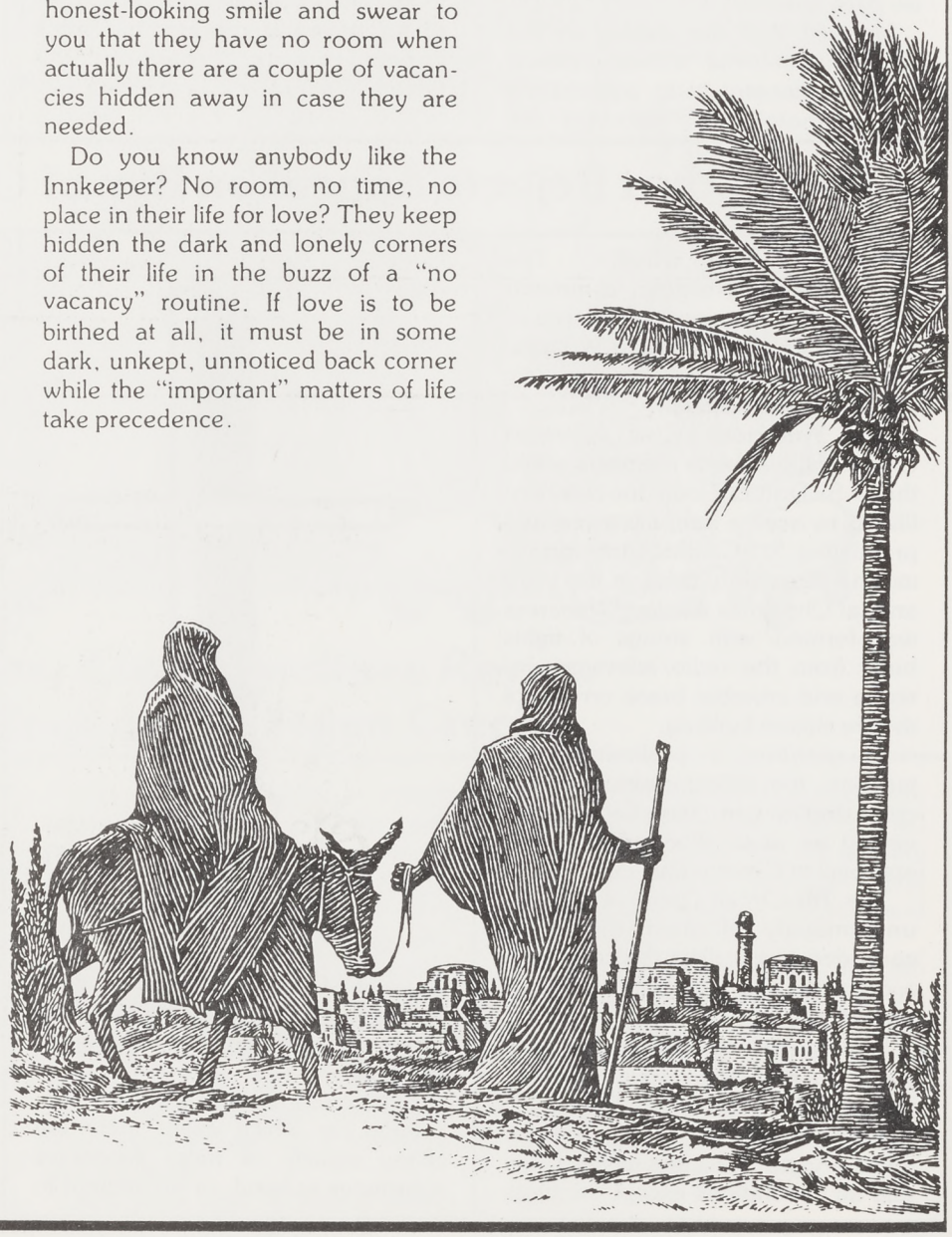
So lets take a look at what happens when we are faced with such a decision, determining how we will respond to love. We may find that our answer to this question is strangely revealed in how we prepare for Christmas.

Let's look first at The Innkeeper. That one's easy. We all know the often told story. He had no room, no room for Mary, no room for the Christ child, no room for love, except maybe in some dark, unkept, unnoticed back corner.

Now in all of my travels I have learned something about hotels. Hotel keepers sometimes hold a room or two back for emergencies or special circumstances or vip's. Some will stand at the front desk with an honest-looking smile and swear to you that they have no room when actually there are a couple of vacancies hidden away in case they are needed.

Do you know anybody like the Innkeeper? No room, no time, no place in their life for love? They keep hidden the dark and lonely corners of their life in the buzz of a "no vacancy" routine. If love is to be birthed at all, it must be in some dark, unkept, unnoticed back corner while the "important" matters of life take precedence.

Next come the shepherds. They responded to love as an event. Their story was dramatic. It was bright lights, angels and sweet music. "Let's go," they said, "and see this thing that has HAPPENED." Maybe you know someone who experiences love like that. Love is a HAPPENING! That is the last we hear of the shepherds. They came. They adored. They "ah"ed and "oo"ed and they left. "What an event! What a night," they must have said, "What a wonderful, exciting occurrence. Did you see love? Wasn't love wonderful?"



Now I certainly don't intend to belittle the experience of the shepherds. It certainly was an event. It was a very dramatic, very beautiful event. Love can come in very exciting, very important events in our lives. Too frequently, however, we can be tempted to focus more on the event than on love itself. Notice something very contrasting, very interesting about this part of the story. On the one hand, we have angels with radiance lighting up the sky. It was a supernatural, dramatic occurrence. On the other hand, when they traced the event to its source, they found a tiny, delicate newborn child. A child that was birthed in the simplest of circumstances. It was a child that was wrapped carefully to keep him warm. It was a child that was being held and looked after, and nurtured.

Do you know anyone who looks for love by waiting for the big event? Someone who wants to see an angel, hear music, see stars and have a dramatic proclamation. The shepherds will tell you, there is nothing wrong with that. But, you see, all of that is not love, that is, just the product of the messengers of love. Hark the messenger. Follow the star. Trace love to its source and you will find it in the simplest of surroundings. It will be vulnerable in its appearance. Love will have a need to be nurtured and kept warm and given time to grow.

That brings us then to the three wise men from the east. They came to appreciate love, to worship love. They wanted to give lavish gifts to love. They came to honor love in an official capacity.

This is the source of our tradition of gift-giving for Christmas.

Here they were. They traveled a long way. They sought out love, brought wonderful gifts to pay their respects. Then, just as quickly as they had swept into town on their mission, they were gone. Theirs was a formal visit. It was a visit of state. They were here to recognize the authority and the majesty of the Christ child. I wonder just how much this story is reflected in our gift-giving at Christmas. How much of our giving is a recognition of the position and authority to demand respect and love that the recipient of the gift has with us? How many of our trips home or visits to parties or passing along of gifts is actually a diplomatic mission. How many of those trips are made because we are indeed wise people and we recognize power and authority when we see it.

Now we consider Herod the Great. There is a little Herod in each of us. He viewed love as a threat. It was fear he was expressing. He feared that this love coming into his world would disempower him. It might threaten his position. It might rule in his place. Herod moved to kill love before it could threaten to rule at his house. He lashed out. He, in his selfishness, would refuse to let love grow up. He would kill it in it's infancy. He would rather slaughter the innocents around him then risk loss of his power to the rule of love.

We find a great contrast in this story in the way Mary responded to love. Love came to life in her; as an awareness of God in her, love grew, fed by her very being. Love was born of her. Housed in the simplest of surroundings, love was nurtured and cuddled and held.

When the Innkeeper, seeing all of the taxpayers ride away, was moaning because he had so many vacancies...

When the shepherds were left only to talk about the memories of the great event and try to convince their friends that it was real...

When the wise men were trudging back towards the east on their camels, having left their gifts behind and completed their diplomatic mission...

When Herod was left to worry whether, in fact, his slaughter of the innocents had found the new born king and protected his throne... Mary was left...

quietly holding love,
feeding it at her breast,
watching it grow,
seeing it's natural development
and knowing that God
was of her flesh
born into the world.

ON TORONTO TV — BEST DEFENSE IS GOOD OFFENSE (MIAMI)!! Many case histories on ministry gg together 3 2gps - tell priest - get out! Maybe we can push our twin beds together w/o worrying what people say

McNeill: Booted Out of Jesuits by Order of the Vatican

NEW YORK (RNS) -- One more stage remains in the process of his removal from the Jesuit order, according to the Rev. John J. McNeill, S.J., who was handed a "decree of separation" from the Society of Jesus Nov. 11.

The actual dismissal will be done by the Vatican's Congregation for Religious, he said. The congregation has authority over the work of men's and women's religious orders.

Father McNeill, 61, a moral theologian, a founder of Dignity and an acknowledged homosexual, was ordered to stop speaking and writing on the subject of homosexuality in 1977, a year after the publication of his book. At that time the Vatican also told him to remove the church imprint of permission to publish from future editions of the book published by Sheed, Andrews & McMeel (now Sheed & Ward).

The imprint had been granted two years earlier by his provincial after four years of peer review by moral theologians in the United States and Rome.

Father McNeill said he had been obedient to the 1977 silencing order because he thought it was "the best way to show my love for both my church and the gay community" and that he thought his silence would lead to more dialogue between gay Catholics and church traditionalists and a re-examination of church attitudes.

"Ten years later," he continued, "I see the church refusing all dialogue and making its homophobic attitude the basis of its public policy. "Father McNeill, author of the 1976 book *The Church and the Homosexual*," is being dismissed for refusing to obey a directive from Jesuit Superior General Hans-Peter Kolvenbach to give up all public ministry to homosexuals.

"I'm not leaving. I'm being thrown out," said Father McNeill in a telephone interview Nov. 17. The 61-year-old priest, a member of the Jesuit order for 40 years, lives in New York and works as a psychotherapist. An acknowledged homosexual, he is a founder of Dignity, a Catholic organization of homosexuals. A native of Buffalo, N.Y., he trained as a moral theologian and holds a doctorate from the University of Louvain in Belgium.

Two stages of the process of ousting him from the Jesuit order have been completed, he said. "The first stage was to give me an order in holy obedience not to speak in public on homosexuality." That directive was issued two weeks earlier by the Rev. Joseph Novak, provincial of the Jesuits' New York Province, he said.

The second stage came Nov. 11, he said, when a representative of the provincial handed him a letter setting forth his separation from the order. The letter, dated Nov. 12, is posted "in every Jesuit house in the (New York) province," he said.

The letter informed him that Father Novak has initiated "with sincere regret and personal sadness" the proceedings that are expected to result in Father McNeill's dismissal from the order.

Father McNeill said the "technical violations" that led to the notification were a press release he issued and subsequent interviews with reporters. "It is my judgment," said the letter from Father Novak, "That these published interviews and the statements made therein do grave harm to the Society of Jesus and to the Church and are occasions of grave public scandal."

The letter said Father Novak's actions were taken in accord with canon law and on the advice of consultants. The provincial's decree "separates Father McNeill from his religious community and from all Jesuit houses," says the document.

Referring to use of the word "scandal" in Father Novak's letter, Father McNeill said, "I feel the real scandal was the Vatican's recent letter on homosexuality."

In a sharp criticism of the Vatican statement, he said, "When they assert that homosexual orientation is an objective disorder 'without taking into account all the scientific evidence that calls that judgment into question, when they accuse all of us

Springfield Be Gay 1964ps - Marriott's gay day - Lovers in 70's together soaps - Walking hand in hand in daylight - -read letter to Schuller Inst (NW) before appearance -

who have sought civil justice for gay people as being callous' to the risk of the lives of our gay brothers and sisters because of the AIDS crisis, and finally, when they lay the blame for the irrational and violent reactions of homophobes on the victims of that violence...the Vatican portrays a mean and cruel spirit that is in conflict with both the spirit and letter of the gospels. I cannot continue to be silent in the face of this evil."

Father McNeill noted that St. Ignatius, founder of the Jesuit order, instructed his followers to "reach out to the outcasts, the abandoned and those repudiated by others. In 1986, there are few groups in our society more universally repudiated than my gay brothers and sisters, especially in the light of the AIDS crisis." Jesuit Superior General Kolvenbach will bring the Jesuits' case against Father McNeill to the Congregation for Religious in Rome, and the congregation is expected to order his explusion.

The Rev. Joseph Parkes, assistant to Father Novak, said the action taken by the provincial "normally leads to formal dismissal from the Society of Jesus. Formal dismissal in a case such as this can only be effected by the Holy See after the case is presented to it by the Father General...in Rome."

"They (the Jesuits) had a choice of processes," said Father McNeill. "It's not the Society themselves that expels. It's the Congregation. I think the reason is that the primary pressure did not come from the Society of Jesus. I'm certain of that. I had approval of the work I was doing, my ministry to Dignity."

In his Nov. 2 press release, Father McNeill said he believed the Jesuit Superior General called for his dismissal on the orders of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "In Cardinal Ratzinger's opinion, reports of an address on freedom of conscience I gave Labor Day weekend 1985 to a national convention of Dignity, a Catholic gay group, violated the orders I received after the publication of my book," said the statement.

A former faculty member of the now-defunct Woodstock Theological College, Father McNeill has in recent years worked as a psychotherapist.

The most recent order from Cardinal Ratzinger "forbade me as a priest and psychotherapist to minister in any way to gay people," said the priest's statement. "Father General (Kolvenbach) was willing to allow me the private ministry of my practice of psychotherapy but no ministry that could come to public notice."

The priest said he had "after prayer and extensive consultation" concluded that, "as a Jesuit priest, as a moral theologian, as a psychotherapist, as a person who is himself gay, and as a human being, I cannot obey that order in conscience."

Father McNeill will technically remain a priest after his explusion from the Jesuits, unless steps are taken by Catholic officials to remove him from the priesthood and excommunicate him.

He will be unable to function as a priest after the Vatican action, however, unless he is accorded "faculties" to do so by the bishop of a diocese. "It would be a miracle" if a bishop took that step, he said. "I've stepped on a lot more toes" than the Rev. Terrence Sweeney, a dismissed Jesuit who is expected to be accorded priestly faculties by Archbishop Roger Mahony of Los Angeles. "I don't think he challenged the church teachings."

"I can say Mass until the order of explusion is issued," he said. "I have to sit down with a good canon lawyer. I'm not sure I couldn't say Mass on a private basis."

Father McNeill said he will continue his teaching and his work as a psychotherapist. "I now have the possibility for the first time in 20 years to speak publicly and write." His next book, he said, will be titled *"Spiritual Messages to a Gay Christian."* A

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MORAL TRUTH AND

by Dr. Daniel Maguire

Cultural Anthropology and Ethnics in Relation to Human Sexuality (As presented at the National Council of Churches/Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches Consultation on Sexual Ethics in Chicago in November of 1986 by Dr. Daniel Maguire).

The area of "morality" was for a long time the center of the American educational structural system. If you go back to 1890 and look at Amhurst College, for example, in their bulletin you will find that the main course of their entire four years was Ethics. There was a whole page to describe it. It was taught by the President of the University. It was considered the capstone to turn out a sensitively evaluating person into the world. By 1910 you look at the same Amhurst College bulletin and ethics had become an elective for sophmores. How did that happen? What took place? What happened in between was that a country had gone drunk on what you could call "scientism" and a feeling that the great moral value questions no longer had to be asked. Somehow objectivity was scientific objectivity and the very concept of "value free" grew up in the mid-nineteenth century and into our century. There was the idea that we could, somehow, avoid moral value questions. It does raise the good question , "What is this thing from which we have been hiding?"

To explain it a bit to you, suppose you were to come in here today hungry for truth and you said, "Give us some truth". I say, "Okay I'll lay a little truth on you. Water boiled to 212 farenheit will bubble". You are not sure of that, so you all head right down the hall to a small kitchen and you try it and you come back mumbling to yourselves, "The man was right". So you come in again wanting more truth. I say "Take that same water, chill it down to around 30 degrees and it will solidify." You go back to the kitchen and try that and it works. You come back saying to yourselves, "My goodness that was true, it happened. The man's got a streak going here." I say, "I'll give you more truth, promises made to persons now dead should be observed." Now you all go back into the kitchen and...What are you going to do there? I just switched gears. I moved you from scientific knowledge which can be quantified and recorded and fit on floppy and sloppy discs into moral knowledge. It is moral knowledge upon which all of civilization, indeed all religion rests. You are not going to get anywhere in the kitchen with that. You might as well come back and sit down.

Yet, I am telling you this, you know, just as surely that you know water will boil at a certain temperature, that promises should be kept to corpses. Some of you are saying in your cynical minds,"I don't know about that, if the person is dead I am a little bit off the hook. I have enough to do to take care of the living." You might be saying that, but you don't really believe that. Let me show you how you know something different:

Suppose your son became very, very wealthy and was in a hospice room with a friend of his. The friend was very poor and was dying. He says to your son, "Joe, I could die happily if you would do something for me. Some time ago I cheated a fellow out of four hundred bucks. What a terrible thought, I have nothing to pay him back. It is an awful thing to leave this world owing him that money." Your son Joe agrees to help his friend by writing that man a check in the dying friend's name and in honor of their friendship for four hundred dollars. "I

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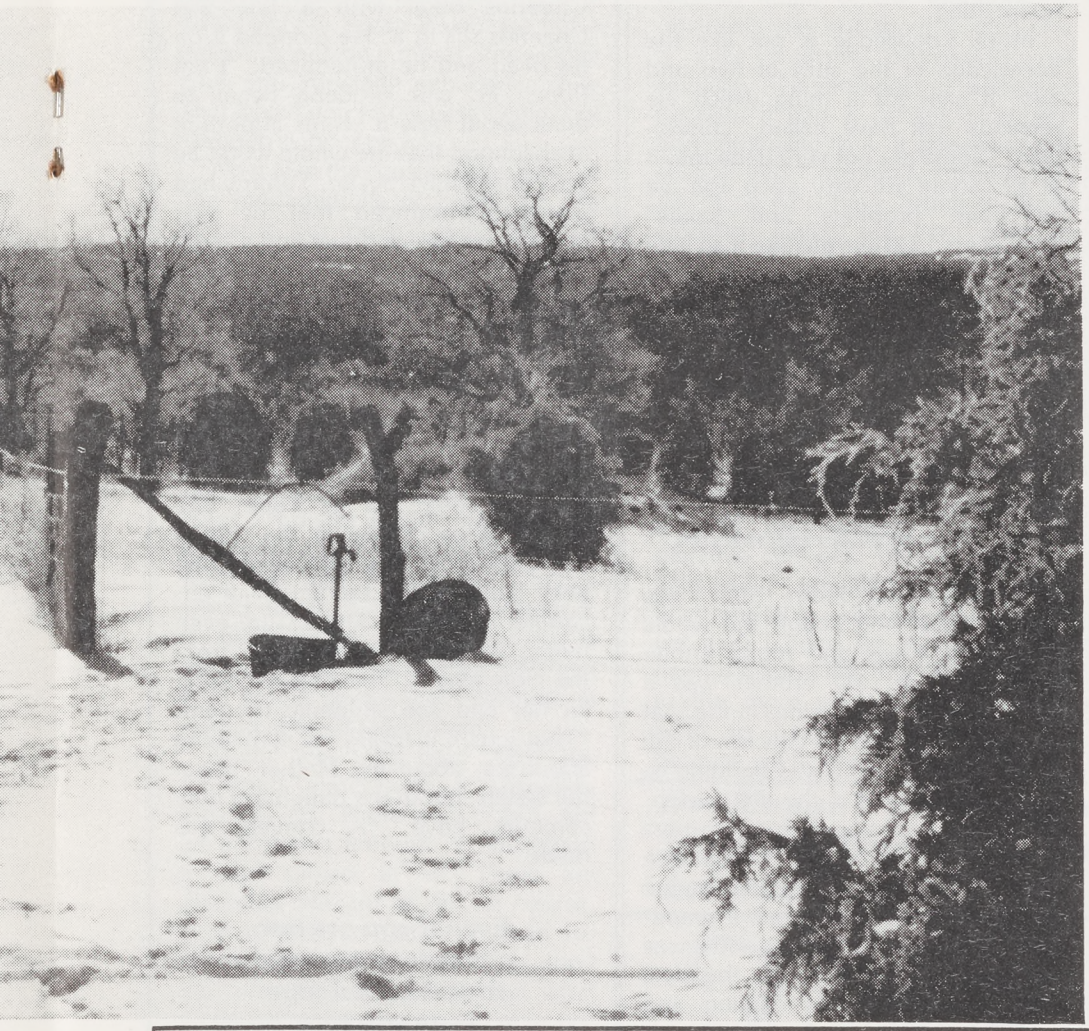
Editor's note: This lecture on sexual Ethics as presented by Dr. Maguire in Chicago is transcribed from a tape recording of the presentation. It is presented in two parts in Journey Magazine. The second part will appear in the next issue. Dr. Maguire is Professor of Moral Theology at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He is author of THE MORAL CHOICE and TOWARD A NEW AMERICAN JUSTICE.



promise", he says, "that I will." The friend hears that and smiles, falls into a deep sleep and very quickly dies. Your son looks around the room and says, "Well, nobody heard that. He got the promise he wanted. He died happy and I still have my money. That's how guys like me get rich." Now is there a person in the room who doesn't think that son of yours is a sleaze? Is there anyone in the room who would say, "That's my boy, I love him, huh. For a while I thought he was going to turn out like his Mother, but oh, no he's a chip off the old block." No, the kid is wrong and you know that a promise should be kept to that dead person.

Where did you get knowledge like that? How can you be walking around with the belief that promises should be kept to corpses? Where did it come from? You also even know that in certain circumstances you are better off dead than alive when personal values are at stake. There is a story in a book by J. Glen Gray, *THE WARRIORS (PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES OF MEN IN WAR)*, in which he tells about an incident during the Second World War in the Netherlands when the local old folks had been shooting up the German occupiers. The Germans rounded up twenty of them. They lined them up against the wall and ordered a group of five German soldiers to shoot them dead. One German soldier said, "I can't do that. I can't just shoot those people." So he was lined up with the twenty and twenty one people were gunned down. Now if that were your son, amid your grief for his death you would have seen beauty. There was something lovely in it. He laid down his life. He somehow knew, though he never read Aristotle, that it is better to suffer injustice than to perpetrate it. He died and his blood was Holy. You know that, but where in the world did you learn it? After all, we do know that this body is a substratum of what we feel we have going for us. To say that losing all of the blood and all of the breath out of it can be for a positive good, where do we get knowledge like that? That is amazing knowledge. That's moral knowledge.

Moral knowledge goes all the way from keeping promises and truth telling and revering persons and having civil rights and human rights all the way to that end point of, "Greater love than this (greater morality than this) nobody has than to lay down your life for a brother or sister." (To quote a friend of mind). That is the area in which we are working. You can already see it is different and mysterious.

Moral knowledge is born in the affections. It is, in fact, so deep in the affections that it even resides in the tenuous, but deep and essential, mystical levels of our soul. Moral knowledge is born at your level of mysticism. Now mysticism is a bad word in our society. I have to clean it up right away and take away some of the meaning that is attached to it. They used to talk about the "Mystical" leader of Iran, the Iyatollah Kohmeini. Sometimes Christian writers have even fouled the word up. They refer, for example, to the mysticism of St. John of Alcantara in the Middle Ages who used to practice custody of the eyes.

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MORAL TRUTH AND HUMAN SEXUALITY

He just sort of kept his eyes down in contemplation all the time, was always bumping into walls, couldn't find his way to the dining room and obviously needed counseling. They didn't give him any counseling. They called him a "mystic". So the word is used as though it is a rare thing. There are no card-carrying Mystics walking around here. I would go to the Thomistic tradition and say that mysticism is the word we use meaning to lie hidden, to be concealed, to be at the depths. Mystical love is love at its deepest levels. We can love superficially. Some of you might confide in me during the course of the weekend that you like Chicletts. I will be pleased at that confidence and I will take your confiding in me as something as a compliment, but it is not really impressive.

Love can move down to deep and powerful levels where we are touched at the deepest levels of our soul. That is where we are looking when we move into moral knowledge. There is where the experience of morality is born. There is where you experience the value of persons in their environment in all of their preciousness. That is the beginning of moral conscience and of civilization.

It is an experience which is also a faith experience. You can't prove that 20 people are worth dying for. You can believe it. Sartre talks about the time when he met a young couple who had a new baby. It was at a time when the things which he had written had been translated into practically every language which had been printed. He said that when he held the baby in his hands he realized that if you took everything that he had done in his life and put it on one side of a scale and put the preciousness that he was holding on the other side, that all he had done would weigh practically nothing. It is almost a mystical experience. It is the holding of a blessed sacrament. We often don't get that experience of what one another is worth. We get it with children when we are unthreatened. It is the experience of morality. It is the experience of a deepening sense of what human life is really worth. That is the beginning of morality. Life is worth the truth, worth promises and worth the lack of discrimination. That is the root of the entire thing.

Moral knowledge is not like the knowledge of the sum of two and two. It calls for a thing which we religious folk have called "conversion". Some are not very deep into it at all. Some are very deep and we call them "prophets" and "saints" and "seers". Others are into it so little that they have to be incarcerated and kept away from human interchange because they can not function at all with so little respect for life. There is a great variety and it is a process phenomenon that we are into.

Life is worth the truth, worth promises and worth the lack of discrimination.

Conversions occur and they illustrate just how tough the whole subject of ethics and moral knowledge can be. My brother was a Chaplain with the Marines in the Viet Nam war. He had no criticism of the war until one day he was standing by the side of a road in the dry season. All of our tanks and troop carriers were roaring by a little Vietnamese girl. She had a huge Bubonic Plague thing about the size of half a grapefruit growing out of her leg and it was festering. He noticed that the dust from our trucks was coming and covering the sore and caking it with mud. Suddenly the thought struck him, "What are they doing that is more important than that little girl's leg?" All of a sudden a dove was born in a Marine outfit. The entire war looked different. He would no longer view anthing the same. Why? The way I would put it; the foundation of moral experience had finally reached the mystical levels of his soul. It was a moment of conversion, a moment of change.

Now let me give you another example: My wife Marjorie did not consider herself for many years to be a feminist. She studied it but the conversion hadn't happened. Then two Popes died in succession. Our house, since we are old Catholic types, was full of Papal stuff on the TV. Finally our little boy Tommy joined us. He had gotten a red Cheerios bowl with a few wet Cheerios still in it. He plopped it on his head and he announced, "I am Pope!" My wife suddenly began to think about how it seems important in childhood that the whole world be your imaginative oyster. Tommy had already announced that he was going to be a truck driver and a snow plow driver and an Easter Bunny. You have to do that. The world will chasten your dreams. She looked back at the TV screen and she realized that if Tommy were the little girl that we always hoped we would have, and did not have, sooner or later the word would come to her that she could not be Pope. She looked more closely at the screen and discovered that masculinity had been declared the sacrament of encounter with God. There were even fences keeping women away from the Holy places. The total exclusion hit her and she suddenly thought, "That screen is telling me something about me, about my Mother, about my Sisters, about the daughter I may someday have." A convert was made.

Even if you are not a religious person, moral knowledge puts you into faith experience.

Now there are two experiences of conversion. It is not that way in Math. It's not that way in Science. In the realm of morality, to move deeper into appreciation of what human life deserves requires a conversion. Sometimes it is a "Zap" experience.

Sometimes it happens quickly. I gave you two "Zap" experiences. But sometimes it is more like deciding when it is daylight. You can't really say at what moment it happens. You just, sort of, cross

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over into. It is a delicate area. We are working in morality where knowledge involves conversion. It involves the deepest levels of our affectivity. It involves our soul and we even reach for words like mystical to describe it. Even if you are not a religious person, moral knowledge puts you into faith experience. It is that which you know believingly, not through sight or proof.

Now with that quick summation of the fundamentals of Ethics, let me move to our topic at hand which is "Sexuality".

There is really no Biblical ethics of sex. The Bible was not pelvicly fixated, one might say. It moved into a world in which a great number of its devotees have since become that way. You don't hear too much else from an awful lot of quarters. The other day a reporter called and asked what I thought of the new Vatican statement on homosexuality and I told him that I wish the Vatican would declare a 20 year moratorium on pelvic issues. He did print that in the paper and maybe they will read it. It would certainly be progress in human affairs if they would.

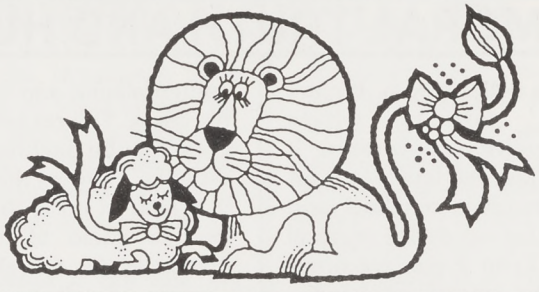
There was not born with the Christian experience a complete ethics of sex. There was, in fact, not an enormous amount of absorption in that subject at all. There are elements relevant to sex, of course, because that is part of human relationship and love, etc. You don't find an ethics of sex. In fact what Christians did was what any of us do. They absorbed from the surrounding culture. What they moved into was a world in which the dominant philosophy was Stoicism. Stoicism was probably the most popular philosophy in centuries. It really spanned the entire world. They had a philosophy of sex. It was a very negative one. According to the Stoics the essence of personal value was rationally..., the absence of emotion. Sheer, limpid rationality was human being at its best. Morality is based on what you think persons are. That is what they thought persons were. They even had stories of their sages, their heros. One was contemplating and they put a rat on his chest. The rat began to eat at his chest and he paid no attention. They thought, "Wow, that's great". Now that kind of an anthropology, which was so afraid of the emotions..., obviously was not about to give you a very healthy philosophy of sexuality. Nevertheless it appealed because it had a certain asceticism and spirituality to it. It appealed and seeped into Christianity throughout. All of us who have drunk in these Christian waters are very deep in Stoicism.

The only way they could justify sexuality, which was very emotional, was to say that it was rational to use it for reproduction. Does that sound familiar? The whole thing on birth control and so forth simply came out of Stoic philosophy. It had nothing to do with Biblical religion whatsoever. Stoicism also brought in a lot of negative attitudes. We are very uptight about sexuality. We are very uncomfortable without sexuality. If we hadn't been we wouldn't even need a session like this. We could go to the more important issues. We have to have meetings like this because we have created a problem. It does hurt human beings in a number of ways and a lot of conversion is needed out there before the subject can be put into proper perspective.

It is also something to add that not only do we not come at this with a completed philosophy or theology of sex out of our Biblical roots but we are never going to get a perfectly clear ethics of sex. We always want that. As James Gustuson of the University of Chicago put it one time, "It seems to please God to leave some things unclear". That is hard to take. Especially if you have a Fundamentalist streak in you, and we all do, you want the issues cleared up thoroughly and stashed away. You want them taken care of not to worry about again. We want a clarity that is often not present. Aristotle put it differently when he said, "An educated person looks for no more certitude than is available." It would seem like absolutely solid advice, irresistable advice. Yet, we are constantly in pursuit of certitude that is not available. A number of these areas are mysterious and you can be, as the Irish say, "Entirely too smart," if you come up with certitudes that just aren't there.

Dr. Maguire continues with part two of Moral Truth and Human Sexuality in the next issue of Journey.

PEACE



National Council of Churches Warned of Activities of the So-Called *"Christian Identity Movement"*

(Chicago) -- In its Governing Board meeting in Chicago in November the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA was warned of the activities of a group calling itself the "Christian Identity Movement" and passed a resolution condemning the activities of the groups involved.

The "Christain Identity Movement" was described to the Council as being made up of a number of white supremacy and anti-Semitic groups. "The White Supremacy Movement has found new ways to reach out and bring people into their movement," said Leonard Zeskin of the Center for Democratic Renewal. He described the Center for Democratic Renewal as a clearing house for community-based efforts to counter hate group activity. "The Christian Identity Movement," according to Zeskin, "sees itself as a complete theological system with ideas of sin, judgement and notions of redemption. This so-called theological system is based on race."

The report to the Council said that the basic concept underlying the "Christian Identity Movement" is that the "Ten Lost Tribes of Israel" have been "found" in the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic people of the United States, Britain and northern Europe, and they are supposedly the inheritors of the promise made by God to the Chosen People. They have supplanted the original Hebrew tribes, who failed to recognize Christ as the Redeemer.

Members of the movement are said to believe that Jews are the result of Eve's becoming impregnated by Satan and that persons of color are what they call "pre-Adamic" or before Adam and Eve and therefore a lower species.

The movement's notion of "choseness", according to Zeskin, is that the United States is the "Promised Land" in their theology the battle of Armageddon will take place in the United States. They believe that they must prepare themselves to fight through this battle of Armageddon. The theology, thus, becomes a justification for violence, storing weapons, preparing for survivalism and for actually carrying out a race war. "That is precisely what they are about," said Zeskin. "They speak, walk and talk and act as if they are carrying out scripture," he added. He called "Christian Identity" the common theology for such groups as the Ku Klux Klan, Aryan Nations, etc. The theology allows extreme right-wing organizations to reach out to persons who are undergoing social and spiritual crisis and, in the name of religion, bring them into the white supremacy movement.

Various preachers of "Christian Identity" have erected various doctrines but the thrust of them is that the present predicaments of the United States are due to the "sins" of the true children of God in failing to maintain the nation's racial and moral purity. They have allowed immoral, unworthy persons to come among them and the nation can only be redeemed if they correct their error. This doctrine attracts some religiously-inclined persons who otherwise might not be bigoted, and provides a useful religious "respectability" for others who are already bigoted. It also provides scapegoats for those who are perplexed about their plight, and is said to have attracted some farmers in the Midwest and South who are struggling with sudden and disastrous debts.

The movement's theology runs hand-in-hand with some of the paramilitary hate movements that have come to visibility because of recent prosecutions for illegal weapons possession, bank robberies and murders. "Religious" ministries, such as the Church of Jesus Christ - Christian, The Lord's Covenant Church, and others in various small towns around the country are reported by the National Council of Churches Division of Church in Society to be closely linked to paramilitary encampments. The report listed some of those encampments as the Minute-men, the Aryan Nations, The Order, the Christian-Patriots Defense League and the Covenant the Sword and the Arm of the Lord.

The report called the movement a theological "stalking horse" by means of which the Klan, neo-Nazis and anti-Semites "can approach unsuspecting and Biblically unversed believers with teachings that may appear superficially plausible but can have poisonous consequences."

In a resolution the NCCCUSA Governing board affirmed its opposition to the ideology of the "Christian Identity" movement and condemned the movement's "perversion of Christianity as a pretext for hatred, racism and anti-Semitism."

NEWS & VIEWS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS

Vatican Document Urges More Severe Stand Against Homosexuals

by William Bole
Religious News Service Staff Writer

WASHINGTON (RNS) -- In a challenge to pastoral practices underway in the United States, the Vatican has directed Catholic bishops to take a more militant stand against what it termed the "intrinsic moral evil" of homosexuality.

While acknowledging the need for church ministries to homosexuals, a new Vatican document warns bishops against becoming too accepting of homosexuals and allowing them to use church buildings for meetings and services.

In cities such as Baltimore, Seattle and San Francisco, bishops have permitted special services for groups of gay Catholics. This has been part of efforts toward greater cooperation and understanding between gays and the church, which considers homosexual acts sinful.

But the 14-page document urges bishops to distance themselves from such groups. It declares the homosexual activists are seeking to change church doctrine by espousing "deceitful propoganda" and "misleading" well-meaning pastors.

In statements prepared for a news conference outside the residence of Archbishop Pio Laghi, Pope John Paul II's delegate to the U.S., homosexual Catholic groups criticized the document as another crackdown on widespread pastoral practices in the American church.

Representatives of dioceses with ministries to gays said they could not make immediate formal responses because the bishops had yet to receive copies of the document even though it was released to the press on Oct. 30 at the Vatican.

In a key section, the document by the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith goes beyond traditional church teachings by even criticizing inactive homosexuals.

"Although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin," the document said, "it is a more or less strong tendency ordered towards an intrinsic moral evil, and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder."

The church has traditionally taught that the sin lies in same-sex activity rather than in homosexual orientation. Church-run ministries to gays have emphasized this point and even downplayed condemnations of homosexual activity in reaching out to homosexuals.

This teaching has made it possible for some bishops to remain neutral on, and sometimes endorse, legislation granting homosexuals full civil rights. But the Vatican document takes aim at legislation as well, calling such initiatives an effort to affirm the morality of homosexual conduct.

While condemning physical violence directed at homosexuals, the document adds that "when civil legislation is introduced to protect behavior to which no one has any conceivable right," it is not surprising when "irrational and violent reactions increase."

In issuing the document, the Vatican said it was responding to groups which seek to change church teachings on homosexuality, and, according to church officials, the document is aimed primarily at the United States and some Western European countries.

The letter is seen by church observers as being linked to the Vatican's attempts to limit dissent from official church teachings in the United States. It also follows recent disciplinary steps by Rome against Archbishop Raymond J. Hunthausen and theologian Charles Curran who were accused, among other things, of permissive attitudes toward homosexuality.

The document, although warning at one point against "unwarranted generalizations and demeaning assumptions" about homosexuals, seemed to contrast with pastoral plans developed recently by some Catholic dioceses.

In Baltimore, the officially approved ministry to homosexuals has emphasized what it calls the "positive images" of homosexual people and admittedly downplayed church teachings against homosexual activity.

In guidelines issued last April it committed itself to defending "the pastoral care and political rights" of gays. Archbishop John Quinn of San Francisco has approved a ministry plan which states that the church should accept and affirm the sexual "identities" of homosexuals.

The more recently-developed diocesan ministries to victims of the deadly disease AIDS have also come into question as a result of the new document. In launching such a ministry in his archdiocese recently, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago spoke in strongest terms about the need to avoid judgmental attitudes in dealing with the AIDS crisis.

Even though the prelate had fought a gay-rights measure which lost in Chicago's city council this past summer. He said in a pastoral statement on AIDS that the response to the disease should be "compassionate, not vengeful" and that "it is not our task to make judgments."

But the Vatican document, in what church officials described as an allusion to the AIDS epidemic, said supporters of homosexual rights seem unmindful of the fact that "homosexuality may seriously threaten the lives and well-being of a large number of people."

In prepared statements, two national gay Catholic groups, Dignity and New Ways Ministries, warned of the effects of the document. Dignity, which sponsors local ministries nationwide, said it would fight the new declaration.

"Any attempt to undo or halt the development in the U.S. Catholic community in these issues will cause serious pastoral harm and only serve to further alienate homosexual people," New Ways said in a separate statement.

NEWS & VIEWS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS

CHILD'S DEATH FROM AIDS EVOKES OUTPOURING OF GRIEF IN CHURCH

by William Thorkelson
Religious News Service Correspondent

MINNEAPOLIS (RNS) -- A 20-month-old child who was temporarily excluded from a church nursery because she was suffering from an AIDS-related disease died her Oct. 14. (See "Baby with AIDS-related complex excluded from church nursery," RNS Story No. 3308, May 27.)

There has been a "tremendous outpouring of grief" over the death of Jessica Hazard in the congregation of Oak Grove Presbyterian Church in suburban Bloomington, according to the Reverend Frank Johnke, associate pastor.

Jessica's parents, Dorothy and Dwight Hazard, and officials of the congregation decided to go public with the infant's condition because the 1,500-member church was the primary community for the child outside of her home.

"That was the right thing to do, the right decision," Mr. Johnke said after Jessica's death. He said it led to understanding within the congregation and a demonstration of love.

The baby contracted AIDS through blood transfusions that were administered in 1984 at Minneapolis Children's Hospital, where she was born 12 weeks premature. Although the child was kept from the regular nursery during church services, Mr. Johnke said special provisions for her care were made with volunteers, and she often attended worship services with her family.

"Many Oak Grove members took an interest in her and followed how she was doing on a regular basis," he said. "her life and death has been traumatic for her family. The family has a strong base in faith and they are handling her death in a faithful way."

In the months since Jessica was diagnosed, the church has conducted a series of meetings on AIDS and related problems. Counseling on how to deal with the issues was provided, and information and study materials were made available.

Dorothy Hazard said Jessica "never walked and didn't talk. When she was diagnosed, she was functioning at about a nine-month level and it decreased to about a three-month level. But you knew the spirit moved in here. She smiled a lot, and she loved to be hugged and cuddled. Jesus worked miracles in her."

A memorial service for Jessica was conducted Oct. 19 at Oak Grove Church.

NEW CALIFORNIA LAW MAY INDICATE ANTI-HISPANIC FEELINGS, United Methodist Hispanic Caucus Says

ST. LOUIS (UMNS) -- A new law passed by California voters in early November to make English the state's "official language" may indicate increasing anti-Hispanic sentiments across the U.S., and even in the church, the Hispanic United Methodist caucus heard here.

Despite enormous growth in the Spanish-speaking population in the United States, members of MARCHA (Methodists Associated Representing the Cause of Hispanic Americans) said discrimination against Hispanics is rising.

And, they added, the recent move by California legislators to discourage widespread use of languages other than English is a signal of the "Hispanophobia" which is sweeping the United States.

Given the population boom among Hispanics and other ethnic and language minorities, especially in Southern California, the passage of Proposition 63 in that state seems "an attempt to limit access of Hispanics to education and politics," the Reverend Leo D. Nieto, Maywood, Calif., told the annual meeting of MARCHA here.

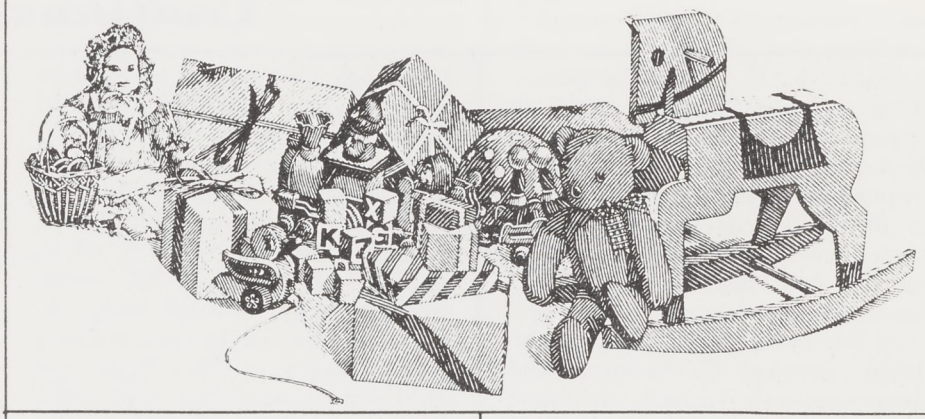
"We're experiencing tremendous growth in the Hispanic population, and statistics indicate that by the year 2000 the largest minority in this country will be composed of Spanish-speaking persons. Yet, the state with the largest and fastest growing Hispanic population passed a law like that (Proposition 63)," Mr. Nieto said.

According to data reported to MARCHA by the General Board of Global Ministries in 1985, most of the denomination's -- and the nation's -- Hispanic population resides in Southern California. Proposition 63, MARCHA members said, could serve to quench strong advocacy for bilingual education and could set a precedent for such bilingual aids as ballots for voting.

Proposition 63, an amendment of the state constitution, affirms English as the "official state language" and orders legislators to "take all steps necessary to see that the role of English as the common language of the state is preserved and enhanced." Although some say the wording is too vague to have any real effect, civil rights groups across the nation fear the measure could trigger nationwide discrimination against language minorities.

NEWS & VIEWS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS

NON–VIOLENT TOY CATALOG AVAILABLE



WASHINGTON (UMNS) -- Shelves are being stocked again this Christmas shopping season with violence-oriented toys, but parents seeking an alternative can find help in a booklet being issued by the United Methodist Board of Church and Society here.

The handbook, developed by three women in Wichita Falls, Texas, features descriptions from toy packages of contents, articles on television programming and commercials, suggestions for non-violent toys and a list of organizations providing information for parents.

The "Parent's Guide to Non-violent Toy Buying" was first introduced by Mary Pliska, a Roman Catholic campus minister in Wichita Falls; Joy Parsons, a social worker and a Presbyterian, and Sunny Davidson, who directs a preschool program at First United Methodist Church in Wichita Falls. The work has been approved by both an interfaith religious panel and an interdisciplinary panel of academicians, according to Beverly Roberson Jackson, a Church and Society staff executive.

Dr. Jackson said publication of the booklet is one of two steps the social action agency is taking related to children and violence in society. The second is co-sponsorship with other church and secular groups of the National Children's TV Awareness Campaign.

The year-long campaign is an effort to reinforce family communication about television programs and commercials, as well as promote concern for effects of violent actions and attitudes within families, she said.

The catalog is available for $1 from Discipleship Resources, P.O. Box 189, Nashville, Tenn. 37202.

METHODISTS RECONCILING CONGREGATIONS INVITED TO MEETING

WASHINGTON (UMNS) -- Local United Methodist churches that have declared themselves "reconciling congregations" open to lesbians and gay men will be invited to a gathering in San Francisco in late March.

The decision to hold the gathering was made by Affirmation, an unofficial caucus of United Methodists for lesbian/gay concerns. The purpose will be to discuss future directions of the program and ways to strengthen local church ministries with lesbians and gay men.

Sixteen churches and one annual conference have joined the reconciling congregations program. Four annual conferences passed resolutions commending the program to their congregations.

Affirmation members also decided to increase regional and local organizing efforts and start preparing for the 1988 General Conference.

A committee was named to prepare proposals to make the denomination more inclusive in its ministries and to serve the needs of persons with AIDS, their families and friends. The committee will also plan challenges to existing church policies, including the ban on ordaining or appointing clergy who are "self-avowed practicing homosexuals"; denial of denominational funds to organizations that "promote the acceptance of homosexuality" and the Social Principles statement that "the practice of homosexuality 'is' incompatible with Christian Teaching."

In the last 18 months the number of Affirmation chapters has grown from seven to 21. An effort will be made to develop a stronger presence in the central United States.

Affirmation's membership includes lesbian and gay men, bisexuals and heterosexuals who affirm the inclusion of all persons in the United Methodist Church, regardless of affectional/sexual orientation. Its next meeting will be April 24 — 26 in Nashville, Tenn.

Committee Chooses United Methodist Hymnal Title: Continues Editing Texts

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS) -- While still up to their necks in language controversies, the United Methodist Hymnal Revision Committee began to eye the culmination of their work as they considered book cover designs and chose a title for the new hymnal Nov. 17-19 here.

In the committee's report to the 1988 General Conference, the denomination's highest governing body, it will suggest the title be THE UNITED METHODIST HYMNAL, with the subtitle THE BOOK OF UNITED METHODIST WORSHIP.

At its November meeting, shortly before language issues put the committee in the news again, the title was approved and a possible cover design incorporating the title and the cross-and-flame symbol was considered.

The book will contain 650 hymns, traditional and contemporary, according to officials. The ritual section will be expanded to include psalms with sung responses, and the marriage ritual and communion services in English and Spanish, if committee proposals pass muster at General Conference.

Language concerns again occupied most of the committee's work, as they approved about 200 hymns from the current BOOK OF HYMNS and other sources most used by United Methodists. Several much-requested old favorites were approved with no changes. "In the Garden," "Bless the Lord," "Glory to His Name" and "I Can Hear My Savior Calling" were among those chosen from books like HYMNS FOR THE FAMILY OF GOD and the COKESBURY WORSHIP HYMNAL.

Some "changes" are really returns to original texts. In "Jesus Christ is Risen Today," the committee approved two stanzas that were original, but were dropped in the 1964 book. One verse reads, "Haste ye women from your fright / Take to Galilee your flight."

"Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory," and "Onward, Christian Soldiers," which were restored to the hymnal after the revision office received more than 11,000 letters protesting their removal, were approved for the new hymnal, but with minor changes. In "Mine Eyes" one word was changed: the word "live" will replace "die" in the line "as he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free."

"Onward" has a verse added, committee officials explained, to describe more specifically the "foe" with whom the church is at war. The stanza reads, in part, "At the sign of triumph Satan's host doth flee." The two hymns, dropped by the committee in May because members felt they employed "unrelenting militaristic imagery," were restored after stormy rebellion by grassroots United Methodists.

But more disputes on the issue of "militarism" arose when a subcommittee on ritual proposed including a social affirmation adopted in July by the World Methodist Council in Nairobi, Kenya. The disagreement arose over a section on confession of sin, which laments "the search for security by military and economic forces that threaten human existence."

Charles Webb, dean of Indiana University School of Music, Bloomington, said he could not accept the statement because it seemed "perjurative to all military personnel" in the United States and in the United Methodist Church "who I believe would be very upset if they read it."

Randy Smith, an attorney from Houston, agreed, suggesting editing so the statement condemns "abuse" of military and economic forces. "All the other statements in the document condemn the 'misuse' of power or 'abuse' of technology. Only military is condemned across the board, and I don't think that's what we want to say.

"In life are many more things through which we search for security -- drugs, sex, alcohol. It's improper in my opinion to single out the military."

But the Reverend Beryl Ingram-Ward, Bellevue, Wash., defended the statement as being representative of a global view of social ills. "This affirmation was adopted by many Third World people who suffer because militarism has consumed their society. Some societies are spending money on arms when their people are starving."

The committee, unable to reach a decision, remanded the statement to the ritual committee for study, and for investigation of whether under international copyright the statement could be slightly altered or edited. Carlton R. Young, hymnal editor, told United Methodist News Service that U.S. members of the World Methodist Council had sent a letter asking that the statement be considered for the ritual portion of the new hymnal.

Racial inferences in language also sparked action by hymnal committee members. In "Come, Every Soul By Sin Oppressed," the committee approved changing the word "white" to "bright" in the line "plunge now into the crimson flood / that washes white as snow."

But the committee decided to keep another white spoken of in a description of an angel's "white wings," saying those words do not exalt white as a symbol for purity. According to guidelines suggested by the General Conference, the committee may change texts, where possible, when they fall short of

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McNeill Booted Out

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Father McNeill's community -- the 25-member West Side Jesuit Community in New York City, headed by the Rev. David Toolan -- issued a press release Nov. 10, saying, "Removing the S.J. after his name, if that is one of the consequences, will not strike him from our hearts as a brother in Christ."

The statement declared that he had served "A notably alienated and maligned minority within and outside the church with extraordinary generosity, integrity, courage and compassion."

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United Methodist Hymnal

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Harold Jacobs, a Native American from Pembroke, N.C., and Hope Kawashima, a Japanese American musician, protested "Jesu, Jesu" because of the line "neighbors are black and white."

"Does that mean only two races are neighbors in God's eyes?" Mr. Jacobs asked, delineating his concern. "I'm not white and I'm not black. What about Native American, Hispanic and Asian people?"

The committee agreed to remand the popular Ghanaian song back to the language committee for further study.

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Dean Peerman, a senior editor at the Christain Century magazine, told RNS that the Vatican statement urging bishops to take a more militant stand against homosexuality apparently speeded up Father McNeill's plans for announcing his unwillingness to follow his superiors' orders on public ministries to homosexuals. Peerman said the article by Father McNeill to be published in a January or February issue of the magazine as part of a series on sexual ethics, "actually was going to be the announcement that he is leaving. The Vatican stole our thunder, so to speak."

The priest's status as a faculty member of the interdenominational Institutes of Religion and Health in New York will not be affected by his departure from the Jesuits, accorcording to Father McNeill. The institutes, founded by the Rev. Norman Vincent Peale, train clergy of all denominations as psychotherapists.

The Rev. Joe Parks of Bronx, N.Y., assistant to Jesuit Provincial Joseph Novak, said Father McNeill "has not yet" left the Society of Jesus and declined to confirm the dismissal directly. But when asked if some arrangements for the priest's departure from the order were in process, he said, "That sounds sufficiently close to the mark."

Father McNeill's statement said Superior General Kolvenbach had told him that his public ministry, since it "involved a public challenge to the church's teaching concerning homosexuality, is not compatible with the mission of the Society of Jesus." He said he was assured by the top Jesuit leader that the dismissal "did not involve any judgment on my ministry."

Expressing gratitude to his Jesuit superiors for their "constant effort... to protect my right to minister within the church," he said, "In my heart and soul I will always be a Jesuit priest. It is painful to me at my age to risk separation from a community I love and respect which has been my family, my security and my life for the past 40 years."

He said he intended to remain a "loyal member" of the Catholic Church and to "Continue to play out my role of critical lover and loving critic."

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International Conference Discusses AIDS Ministry In Minority Communities

AIDS Ministry to Minority Communities was a topic of major discussion at the UFMCC Third International Christian Conference for Lesbian and Gay People of Color held at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, California, November 21-23, 1986.

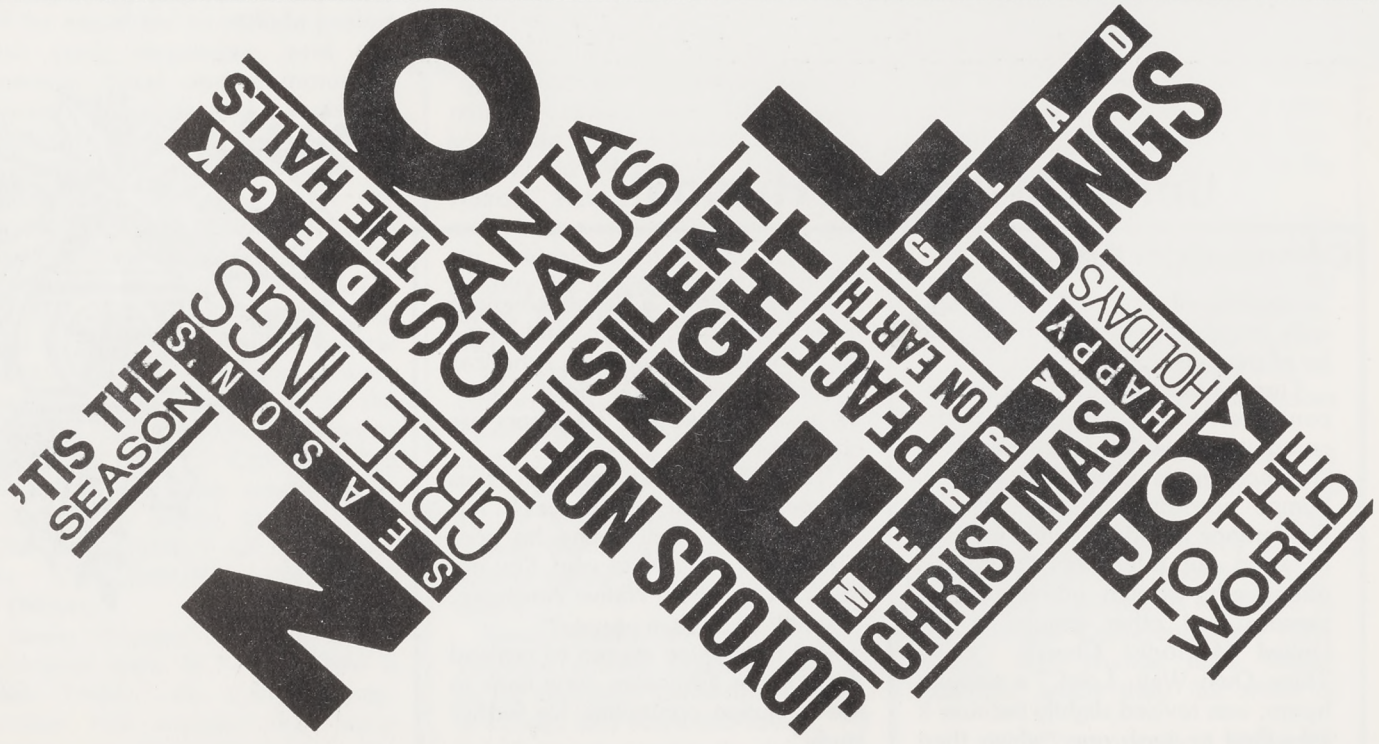
The Reverend Carl Bean, Executive Director of the Minority AIDS Project in Los Angeles and a featured speaker at the Conference, conducted special workshops on AIDS services in minority communities. Bean encouraged people of color to participate in the creation of independent minority AIDS projects such as his, and at the same time urging traditional AIDS projects to be more sensitive and responsive to the unique cultures and needs of various minority communities.

The Reverend Bean also called for public health education on AIDS that involves people of color and is effective in the specific cultural context of the minority communities.

The UFMCC Conference was held in cooperation and concurrently with the Fourth Annual International Lesbian and Gay People of Color Conference.

Other features of the conference included a day-long dialogue on church mission led by the Reverend Delores Berry, Chairperson of the Department of Third World Ministry's Commission on Missiology. The dialogue, which addressed the question, "Is mission service or membership?" included discussions of the history of Christian mission, theologies of mission, cultural issues and the unique ministry of UFMCC.

Business sessions of the Conference received the resignation of the Reverend Yolanda Allen as Executive Director of the Department of Third World Ministries, and set the next Conference for 1988 in the UFMCC's Great Lakes District.



River City MCC Membership in Interfaith Group Stirs Controversy

SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- On October 11th the Interfaith Service Bureau of Sacramento voted 11-9 to accept River City MCC into membership in the ecumenical organization. Now the city's largest Protestant church, Capital Christian Center, has threatened to pull out of the organization because of the vote.

The bureau represents seven denominations and more than a hundred churches and synagogues. The Board of Directors determined that, under their bylaws, ISB should accept the MCC church into membership.

Glen D. Cole, Pastor of the Capital Christian Center, sent a letter to the ISB asking it's directors to reconsider their vote. Cole charged that the MCC sought entrance into the ecumenical organization "for the advancement of its own purposes and lifestyle." He wrote "If the decision remains the same it will be necessary for us to totally disassociate from the ISB."

"Capital Christian Center probably has more gay and lesbian members than Metropolitan Community Church," responded MCC Pastor Reverend Elder Freda Smith. "Our members just don't have to lie about it," she added. "We believe that by joining the ISB we can help the Christian Community make its voice heard on the issue of AIDS," she said. The Reverend Elder Smith expressed a belief that the AIDS crisis has made it seem more expedient that her congregation be a part of organizations such as ISB.

In this letter, Cole claimed that the Bible "Speaks so forcibly on the issue of homosexuality that to even call such a group Christian is a travesty."

The vote of the board of ISB has been set to be reconsidered at its December meeting. It is understood, however, that there is no provision in the bylaws of the organization for reversal of such a decision.

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MCC TORONTO INSTRUMENTAL IN PASSAGE OF RIGHTS LEGISLATION

TORONTO, Ontario -- The Ontario Provincial Parliament has passed an amendment to the Province's Human Rights Code which grants protection from discrimination to gay and lesbian persons. The 64-45 vote followed intensive activity by the Ontario gay and lesbian community and especially by MCC Toronto. Pastor Rev. Brent Hawkes, of MCC Toronto, initiated a letter that was considered pivitol in the decision making process. The letter was signed by 65 clergy and religious leaders who declared their support for the amendment. The signers included two Anglican Bishops, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Canada and other leaders, including those from Roman Catholic, United Church of Canada, Presbyterian and MCC congregations. The letter was sent to all 125 members of Parliament "Our strongest opposition," said Rev. Hawkes, "came from the Ontario House of Roman Catholic Bishops and from Fundamentalist churches." Politicians were heard to comment that the letter was extremely important in helping to blunt the attacks of the Catholic Bishops and right-wing churches.

The amendment inserts the term "sexual orientation" into the Province's Human Rights Code. It, thus, extends to homosexual persons protection from discrimination in the areas of housing, employment and public services. Ontario is the second province in Canada to pass such legislation. Similar protection was extended in earlier legislation in the province of Quebec.

In 1981 the same amendment was proposed in the Ontario Parliament and was heavily defeated. The church involvement was credited with playing an important part in its passage this year.

MCC Toronto members also presented a petition to three Provincial Parties and lobbied legislators prior to the vote. Many persons in the church made phone calls or wrote letters in support of the amendment.

Rev. Hawkes told Journey that the debate in the Legislature was at times "very negative and even ridiculous". "Overall, he added, "It was exciting that the politicians who supported the amendment were much more aware of the real issues and the struggles of the Gay/Lesbian community than ever before. I am very proud of the role our church played and excited for the future of gay and lesbian people in this province."

PEACE

Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches